

TRIBUTE TO WILLIAM "BILL"
CASAMO

HON. JAMES P. MORAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 2, 2009

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the life of Mr. William "Bill" Casamo, community activist, human rights leader, and U.S. Veteran. Bill lived the kind of full, robust life we all hope to live, leaving us at the distinguished age of 92 on October 21, 2009, at his beloved home in Alexandria, Virginia.

Mr. Casamo was a proud veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps and a one-man force throughout the modern American labor movement. His deeply held values and experiences truly reflect the best of what the "Greatest Generation" had to offer our nation.

Bill was the second child of immigrant parents, Hilda Johanson from Norway and Anthony Casamo from Sicily. In 1921, in an effort to provide a better life for their family outside bustling New York City, they moved to Patterson, NY. Early in his childhood, Mr. Casamo demonstrated the strong work ethic that would carry him throughout his life. During his summers in Patterson he worked at local restaurants, slaughterhouses and meat packing plants to help support his family. In 1943, he enlisted with the U.S. Marine Corps, leaving behind his wife and first child to fight in World War II. Mr. Casamo served honorably in the Pacific Theater until his discharge in February 1946.

After the war ended, Mr. Casamo began what would be a lifelong dedication to the American labor movement. The map of his career truly traces the rise of labor throughout our country. His first union job came at the early age of 20 when he was elected a union representative at a meat packing plant in New York. Over the next half-century he dedicated himself to numerous union organizations, including the United Furniture Workers Union, the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, AFSCME, the International Industrial Engineers, and the International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Papermill Workers, which later became the International Brotherhood of Papermill Workers, IBPW. He retired in 1985 as the Director of the Retiree Affairs Department for IBPW. Mr. Casamo has always been proud of his work, often penning a Labor Day message to express his gratefulness for the courage, fortitude and vision of American workers. The same can be said of a nation's gratefulness for Mr. Casamo.

Bill Casamo will be deeply missed. He set the standard as an exemplary individual who spent his life fighting to make a better life for his family and for his brothers and sisters in the labor movement. He is survived by his loving wife of 43 years, Eileen Casamo, 4 children, 16 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren. Bill will be missed, but his warmth, kindness and strength of character will be remembered always.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. K. MICHAEL CONAWAY

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 2, 2009

Mr. CONAWAY. Madam Speaker, on rollcall No. 828—Flake Amendment, had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

CHINESE HUMAN RIGHTS ATTORNEYS TESTIFY BEFORE THE TOM LANTOS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 2, 2009

Mr. WOLF. Madam Speaker, I would like to draw the attention of my colleagues to the following testimonies of two Chinese human rights attorneys who submitted testimony for a hearing last week of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission.

[Written Testimony submitted to the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission on the rule of law in China, Oct. 29, 2009]

BY CRACKING DOWN ON HERESIES, THE GOVERNMENT REDUCES VENUES FOR RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES IN RURAL AREAS

(By Mr. Wang Guangze)

From May 2006 to July 2007, I was working as Beijing-based editor and commentator for the magazine Phoenix Weekly, a subsidiary operation of Phoenix Satellite TV. During that period of time, I had tried to make some reports on the status of religious freedom. Phoenix Satellite TV and its subsidiary magazine Phoenix Weekly were registered in Hong Kong, but due to their pro-CPC features, the CPC gave them the special permission to set up a reporter's station in Beijing and recruit employees. The restrictions on its scope of news reporting are rather lax as compared with other media outlets in mainland China. This is also the main reason why this witness was able to report on religious cases, while other media outlets in China had no such right to report on related content during the same period of time.

The religious case of "Three Grades of Servants" was published in the eleventh issue of Phoenix Weekly in 2006, in a Chinese article of as many as 11,000 characters. The entire report consisted of three articles: "An underground church and sixteen cases involving death," "Xu Wenku and his religious kingdom," and "Religious reality in a rural village." The entire report was written by two journalists, Deng Fei and Liu Zhiming, after they conducted interviews. They were notified by a witness, who also gave guidance on conducting interviews. In the end, I edited on the articles and published them.

Through investigations and interviews, we found that the mainland Chinese Public Security department and prosecution department accused "Three Grades of Servants," a Christian church under the management of Xu Wenku, of carrying out an order to murder twenty members of another Christian house church that called itself "the Lightning in the Orient." Both police and prosecution agencies believed that the two parties not only had the motive of competing for the recruitment of believers, but that there were also conflicts between their religious creeds. After the case was cracked, mainland Chinese police effectively cracked down upon

this type of mutual hate-killings between different religious factions, stopping this kind of hate-killing from spreading. In the meantime, mainland police also destroyed the religious activities of the two house churches. According to estimates, the religious belief of tens of thousands of people's may have been affected.

According to the indictment, Xu Wenku and others swindled people out of 20.5 million RMB in various parts of mainland China by illegally hiring believers and collecting contributions, etc. At the beginning of 2007, Xu Wenku and other core members of "Three Grades of Servants" Church were sentenced to death and were immediately executed.

Through investigations and interviews, we believe that the relatively secluded venues for religious activities in rural areas have given rise to religious heresies or have led some people to be engaged in illegal activities in the name of religion. On the other hand, mainland police, while cracking down on heresies, also take the opportunity to destroy venues for religious activities in rural areas, reducing the number of venues for villagers' religious activities. I believe that mainland police have failed to distinguish the normal religious activities from the illegal and criminal behavior in the religious activities that should be cracked down. As a result, the religious environment in the countryside continues to deteriorate and has entered into a sort of vicious cycle: While cracking down on heresies, the venues for religious activities were reduced. After the venues for religious activities were reduced, the religious activities of villagers were forced to be more secret, and secret religious activities often tend to nourish the creation of heresies and varying degrees of illegal religious activities.

For more evidence, please view the following relevant report at: <http://www.boxun.com/hero/wanggz/>.

[Written Testimony submitted to the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission on the rule of law in China, Oct. 29, 2009]

EXPECTING THE SECOND TRANSFORMATION OF CHINA'S RELIGIOUS POLICIES

(By Mr. Cao Zhi)

1. FOUR STAGES OF RELIGIOUS POLICIES IN CHINA

1. In the 1950s before the Cultural Revolution, the system of administration of religions was formed. The basic characteristics of the system were that the religious organizations were politicized, were classified under the administration as a 'work unit,' and everything in terms of religious life was simplified. In 1978, after the Cultural Revolution, the political program of the country turned to the "priority of economic development" from the "class struggle." In March 1982, "Basic Viewpoints and Basic Policies of Religious Issues of Our Country During the Period of Socialism" (i.e. Document No. 19) was promulgated. This was the first transformation of religious policies in China. On the one hand, this document required the restoration of religious activities held by religious organizations at sites designated for religious activities. On the other hand, however, the predominant idea was that "class struggles still exist within certain areas," and it confined the religious activities within the "normal limits." In 1982, Article 36 of the Constitution, essentially the "Clause on Religious Belief," was formulated based on the religious policies defined in Document 19. With its promulgation, the state now must recognize what it considers "normal religious activities," while at the same time, it must prohibit or crack down on religious activities outside its control. The idea of "the state protects normal religious activities" must be interpreted in the context of this contradiction.

2. After the third wave of the democratic movement in 1989, referred to as “Catholic wave” by Huntington, the ruling party mistakenly believed that the church was against its rule. Therefore, the ideas of “class struggle” and “friends and enemies” fueled a boost in religious [restrictive] policies. In 1991, the “Notification from the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and the State Council on Several Questions Concerning Doing a Good Job in Religious Affairs” (i.e. Document 6) was established. For the first time, this document unequivocally proposed “administration of religious affairs in accordance with law.” It further proposed to “speed up the legislation on religious issues.” Document 6 demanded that the State Administration of Religious Affairs under the State Council, governments in various provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities remain directly under the jurisdiction of the central government-led regulations in cases concerning religion. Between 1991 and 1999, two administrative regulations were formulated and promulgated at the same time by the State Council on January 31, 1994. In the meantime, the State Administration of Religious Affairs under the State Council also formulated four administrative regulations. In the past 10 years, with the exception of Beijing and Shanxi, 29 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the jurisdiction of the central government completed the religious legislation. Among them, the comprehensive laws and regulations from 16 provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government adopted a format with 10 chapters of General Rules, Religious Organizations, Religious Activities, Sites for Religious Activities, Clergymen, Religious Education (or institutions), Religious Properties, Religious Issues Involving Overseas Contacts, Legal Liabilities and Supplementary Articles.

3. After the 1999 Falun Gong Incident, the religious policies became tight. In 2001, the goal of administration of religious affairs of the government was unequivocally defined as to “protect legal activities; stop illegal activities; fight against infiltration and crack down on crimes.” In light of this, relevant legislations started. The 1997 version of the amendment to the Criminal Law changed the “counter-revolutionary crime” in the 1979 version of the Criminal Law to “endanger the safety of the state.” In the meantime, the clause in Article 99 of the latter was incorporated into Chapter 6 from Chapter 1 of the special provisions of the Criminal Law. It was changed to Article 300. The presumptive conditions defined in the Criminal Law, i.e. crimes have three situations: utilizing superstitious sects or secret societies, cult organizations or utilizing superstition in undermining the implementation of the law and administrative regulations of the state; causing death in deception schemes; raping women and obtaining properties through cheating. In comparing Article 300 in the 1997 version of Criminal Law and Article 99 of the 1979 version of the Criminal Law, “cult organization” was added to the subjects of crime and in the objects of crime, “proletarian dictatorship and socialist system” was changed to “implementation of state laws and regulations, personal rights and property rights.” Therefore, the objects of abolishment changed from “superstitious sects or secret societies” to religious organizations. The reason for abolishment has also changed from being a “counter-revolutionary” to “endangering public order” or “violating one’s personal rights or property rights.”

4. In 2005, the “Regulations on Religious Affairs” was promulgated. Its content actually can be traced back to the religious policies in Document 19 and Document 6. Its

structure is based on the experience gathered in the legislation of religious affairs in other places. The language used in this regulation is vague and for the first time on the level of state administrative regulations, it publicly implements the system of administrative approval on religious organizations, sites for religious activities, religious activities, clergymen, religious publications, religious institutions and religious affairs involving overseas entities. Whatever does not obtain an administrative permit is considered illegal.

What is worth mentioning here is that on the question of religious properties, the “Regulations on Religious Affairs” clearly states the responsibilities of agencies in charge of religious affairs and they have the tendency to protect religious activities.

II. FOUR ISSUES.

1. Religious clergymen.

In the process of recognition (agreement)—record filing for religious clergymen, “record filing” is the center of the issue. “Record filing” is merely the name of it, but the real intention is to control the clergy through the approval system. Two examples of this are the Zhaozhi case in Niuxin Temple of Sichuan in 2005 and Shengguan case in Huacheng Temple in Jiangxi in 2006. These incidents have brought up this situation: that is, the recognition and appointment of religious clergymen is not based on the criteria of belief or knowledge in the doctrines of the specific religion, but on whether they obey the government. The religious organizations and the site for religious activities where these religious clergymen serve are therefore subordinate to the government and we have a situation where the state dictates the church. Therefore, such a process violates the Constitutional principle of the separation of the church and the state and is therefore an inappropriate process. One of the ways to reform the religious system is to abolish such a process and turn control over to the religion itself for the recognition and appointment of religious clergymen. The government must not intervene and should withdraw itself from the administration of affairs on religious clergymen.

2. Religious publications.

Due to ideological domination, “freedom of religious belief” in Article 36 of the Constitution can only be interpreted in the narrowest sense of the phrase: i.e. citizens have only the freedom of “belief” which does not include citizens’ freedom of “establishing a church” and “proselytizing.” As “proselytizing” and “establishing a religion” are the core [elements] of the freedom of belief, publication is a necessary means for “proselytizing” and “establishing a religion.” Therefore, if someone intends to limit the expansion of a religion, restricting the publications for the religion is a must. Therefore, the act of printing publications on a large scale and distributing them for free by religious organizations, especially house churches, can be penalized through the “crime of illegal business operation.” on Interpretation of Several Questions in the Specific Application of Law Governing the Trial of Criminal Cases of Illegal Publications. It is stipulated in Article 11 of Zui Gao Fa Fa Shi, 1998, No. 30, that if the circumstance is serious for publication, printing, copying and distribution of publications, and it seriously harms the public order and disrupts the market in violation of the relevant stipulations of the state, the perpetrator shall be convicted of illegal business operation and penalized in accordance of Item 3 of Article 225 of the Criminal Law. Examples of this are the Cal Zhuohua case in 2005, Wang Zaiqing case in 2006, Zhou Heng case of 2007 and Shi Weiha case of 2008.

3. The issue of legality of religious organizations.

The registration system for religious organizations is built upon seven major components based on the regulations on social organizations and religious regulations: the nature of registration process as an administrative permit, the system of double permits, conditions for the legal person, format of rules and regulations, “simplicity” clause of social organizations, the clause that prohibits the establishment of regional branches and the measure of abolishment. Its functions aim at ensuring that the religious organizations obey the system of government administration. The logic for the administration through registration is that the agencies in charge of religious administration exercises its power in approving the registration and issuing the administrative permits. It requires the religious organizations to obey the guidance and supervision by agencies in charge of religious administration and departments in charge of civil affairs. Otherwise, their application for registration would not be approved; religious organizations not registered do not have a legal status and they may not establish sites for religious activities or hold religious activities. They would be abolished by agencies in charge of religious administration and cannot exist. To house churches, “obeying the guidance and supervision by agencies in charge of religious administration and departments of civil affairs” means that they must be affiliated to the TSPM church system. Examples like this are the Shouwang Church case in 2006 and “Autumn Rain” Church case in 2009.

4. The issue of church properties.

It is said in Document 19 of the Central Party Committee that “reasonable arrangements of sites for religious activities is an important material condition for the implementation of the Party’s religious policies and for the normalization of religious activities. At that time, it was required that “we must take effective measures and make further reasonable arrangements for the sites of religious activities according to different situations.”

In the “Notice of the Central Party Committee and the State Council on Several Questions of Further Doing a Good Job in Religious Affairs” (i.e. Document 6) issued in 1991, it is unequivocally proposed that “In implementing and carrying out the policies of freedom of religious belief, we must resolutely correct the phenomenon of violating the citizens’ rights of freedom of religious belief and the legitimate rights of the religious circle. Where there are few sites for religious activities, we must solve the problem of lack of sites people need for their normal religious activities. We must properly resolve the issue of religious real estate properties left from the past so as to contribute to the unity with the vast religious believers and the stability of the state and the society.”

The “Regulations on Religious Affairs” explicitly explains the obligations of the agencies in charge of religious affairs on the church properties. It is stated in Article 33 of the Regulation that “Where the houses or structures of a religious organization or a site for religious activities need to be demolished or relocated because of urban planning or construction of key projects, the demolisher shall consult with the religious organization or the site for religious activities concerned, and solicit the views of the relevant religious affairs department. If, after consultation, all the parties concerned agree to the demolition, the demolisher shall rebuild the houses or structures demolished, or, in accordance with the relevant provisions of

the State, make compensation on the basis of the appraised market price of the houses or structures demolished." First, the article requires that the demolisher of the religious properties must consult with the religious organization that owns the religious properties or the organization that owns the site for religious activities, and solicit the opinions from Bureau of Religion which has jurisdiction over the area where the religious properties are located; second, the precondition for the demolition is that both the owner of the religious properties and the Bureau of Religion must agree to the demolition and relocation; third, in the case of demolition and relocation, priority should be given to the rebuilding of the site for religious activities. That article requires that one must solicit the views from the Bureau of Religion in the demolition and the relocation. In fact, it requires the Bureau of Religion to implement its obligation of protecting the legitimate rights of religious organizations or sites for religious activities, and ensure the religious activities be held in a normal manner and maintains the harmony of religious relationships.

At the end of 2007, Hu Jintao made a speech on religion in which he explicitly pointed out that the government should reflect the will of the believers and earnestly safeguard the legitimate rights of the people in the religious circle.

The current problem is that the conflict over religious properties between the growth of religion and the economic development (i.e. the interests of special interest groups) is becoming more and more prominent. For example, in the religious properties case in Tianshui, Gansu province in 2006, the believers had to use the sit-in demonstrations to defend their rights. Because the local government changed its hard-line attitude in a timely manner, held negotiations with the church, united the believers in a maximum manner, and proposed a solution to safeguard the legitimate rights of the people in the religious circle, the incident was resolved in a way both sides were relatively satisfied, and it quickly restored the social stability. In the case involving religious properties in Taian, Shandong province in 2007, the believers defended their rights by guarding the religious properties, demanding that provincial CCC/TSPM intervene, petitioning at the government site and petitioning in higher authorities. The two sides finally reached a compromise. The advantages of the two cases in Gansu and Shandong have these following characteristics in common: The religious properties are protected either with land for land exchange or remained unchanged.

III. MY PROPOSALS

Mr. Wang Zuoran, the new director at State Administration for Religious Affairs, pointed out in a recent speech in welcoming the United Religious Delegation from the U.S., that the characteristics of the relationship in China between the state and the church are: separation of the church and the state, equality among all the religions, administration according to law, and political participation.

Currently, the key issue is that only religious organizations that are affiliated to the government are regarded as legal religious entities. Only by being in such a status can the organizations hold all the religious activities. In other words, the state protects religious activities in this sense. Otherwise, all other activities are illegal ones and should be restricted or cracked down.

Therefore, the Congress should work with the Chinese government and promote change in the following areas:

1. If they implement the separation between the state and the church, they should

try to abandon the mentality of regarding religions, especially Christianity, as "enemies" or representatives of the West attempting to infiltrate China.

2. If they recognize equality among all the religions, they should recognize the Chinese house churches that have existed for 60 years and that are approved by the TSPM.

3. If they want to have administration on religions in accordance with law, they should require that the state law and regulations meet with the relevant international conventions, such as revising the registration system for religious organizations and change it to the system of record filing from the current system of review and approval; they should let the parents decide first of all or mainly the issue of the religious belief of their minor children, instead of using state control by force on this issue; they should respect and protect religious properties and prevent special interest groups from infringing upon the legitimate interests of the people in religious circles.

4. The religious case widely regarded as a litmus test on the freedom of religion in China is the religious case in Linfen, Shanxi that just happened last month and is still worsening.

Jindengtang Church of Linfen is a house church. It has a history of 30 years and it currently has a membership of 50,000 people. After its religious properties at the church in Fushan County were demolished, they were cracked down during their negotiations with the government. At this time, over 30 of its church branches are forbidden to gather. The pastor, his wife and core-co-workers have been arrested. The US Congress may communicate with the Chinese government on this case through appropriate manners.

NATIONAL FIREFIGHTERS MEMORIAL DAY

SPEECH OF

HON. CANDICE S. MILLER

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 28, 2009

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 729, to designate a National Firefighters Memorial Day to honor the courage, bravery, service and sacrifice of the Firefighters of the United States.

Firefighters are the backbone of our communities. Of the 1,000,000 firefighters in America, 71 percent are volunteer firefighters. They are often the first to respond to an emergency, whether the emergency is a fire, transportation accident, natural disaster, act of terrorism, medical emergency, or spill of hazardous materials. These great men and women respond to nearly 2 million calls each year without hesitation. They have an unwavering dedication to protecting those that are in distress.

First responders are often under-appreciated and taken for granted until crisis strikes and the public reaches out for help and rescue. Against all common sense and natural instinct, firefighters rush to the scene of an emergency and into harm's way without the slightest hesitation. While our natural instinct is to run away from the fire—our fire fighters are running in.

Without the promise of any fame, fortune, or so much as a simple "thank-you", firefighters remain constantly vigilant and ready to serve.

On that horrendous September day in 2001, we lost 343 firefighters in the line of duty.

In responding to approximately 1.6 million fires set each year, we see our firefighters rushing to the scene saving countless lives and sometimes giving theirs in return.

I know sometimes younger people idolize professional athletes and cheer for their favorite sports teams. And the same could be said for some adults too. But if you really want to see true teamwork search no further than your local fire station. It is here where men and women work together and count on each other to protect lives. Their service demonstrates courage, camaraderie, and bravery.

It is time that we honor those men and women who have given their lives and those that were disabled in the line of duty. I urge the President to designate a day as National Firefighters Memorial Day and I urge my colleagues to support this very important legislation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DEVIN NUNES

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 2, 2009

Mr. NUNES. Madam Speaker, on the legislative day of Thursday, October 29, 2009, I was unavoidably detained and was unable to cast a vote on a number of rollcall votes. Had I been present, I would have voted: rollcall 823—"nay"; rollcall 824—"nay"; rollcall 825—"yea"; rollcall 826—"nay"; rollcall 827—"yea"; rollcall 828—"aye"; rollcall 829—"aye"; rollcall 830—"yea"; rollcall 831—"yea."

18TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE EN- THRONEMENT OF ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW

HON. JOHN P. SARBANES

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 2, 2009

Mr. SARBANES. Madam Speaker, today, November the 2nd, marks the 18th anniversary of the enthronement of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, who as the first among equals, presides over a spiritual communion of self-governing churches that represent 300 million Orthodox Christians from around the world. Throughout the eighteen years of his ecumenical ministry, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew has asked all of us to act with sensitivity and understanding towards our brethren and towards our natural environment.

When the Iron Curtain came down, His All Holiness provided spiritual and moral support to those traditionally Orthodox countries that suffered religious persecution under the yoke of communism. And after years of historical tension, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Pope John Paul II earnestly pursued upon the reconciliation of the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christian Churches.

In 1997, recognizing Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew's robust activity and positive influences upon the world, this House awarded him with the Congressional Gold Medal. And when our country was attacked in New York and in Washington, His All Holiness assembled a group of international religious leaders